

**ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND**

**ACTION NOTE: Tuesday 29 May 2015, 2pm**

**Chief Executive's Board Room**

**Waverley Court, East Market Street**

**EDINBURGH EH8 8BG**

**Present:**

- **Board Members:** Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Joan Hewton (JH ERO), Malcolm Burr (MB RO)
- **Advisers:** Roddy Angus (RA Scotland Office), Gordon Blair (GB, DRO SOLAR representative) David Miller (DM DRO, AEA Rep), Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission), Mette Christensen, (MC Electoral Commission), Alex Mowat (AM Scottish Government)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board DRO), Ros Wilson (RW Administrator)

		<b>NOTE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Admin/Note of Previous Meeting/Matters arising etc</b>	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sue Bruce (SB RO)</li> <li>• Stuart Galloway (SG DRO/ERO)</li> <li>• Ian Milton (IM ERO SAA representative)</li> <li>• David Martin (DM RO)</li> <li>• Dougie McGregor (DMcG e-Counting Local Government Liaison)</li> <li>• Louise Unwin (LU Scottish Government),</li> </ul> <p><b>Note of Previous Meeting (14 April) &amp; Matters Arising</b>            The Action Note was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.            CH advised he had drafted a letter to the Electoral Commission feeding back views on guidance notes regarding RO's fees being withheld. It was noted that this was going to Andy O'Neill on Monday.</p>	<b>CH</b>

2	<b>EMB Annual Report</b>	<p><b>EMB Annual Report</b></p> <p>It was noted that the EMB annual report was formally laid before Scottish Parliament on 14 May 2015 and copies sent the Devolution (Further Powers) Committee and Local Government Committee.</p>	
3	<b>Scottish Independence Referendum 2014</b>	<p><b>Update from Scottish Government re Co Fees</b></p> <p>Alex Mowat confirmed that he will be in touch next week with update on CO Fees.</p>	<b>AM</b>
4	<b>UK Parliamentary General Election 7 May 2015</b>	<p><b>Review Seminar on UK Parliamentary Election</b></p> <p>It was noted that a Post Elections Seminar has been arranged for Monday 15 June 2015 to review the event and to identify any key lessons. It was agreed this was an opportunity to improve performance going forward. Comments on general Issues arising such as Registration, Suppliers, Nominations, Campaigning, Postal voting/polling support are being sought. It was noted there will be presentations from the Electoral Commission and Police Scotland regarding Integrity Issues.</p> <p><b>General Issues</b></p> <p>Roddy Angus advised that there is meeting of suppliers being held by the Cabinet Office on 30 June to discuss the more than usual problems UK Wide with printing. A discussion took place regarding issues to be raised and it was agreed to question printers on time-lines and in particular why Scotland is required to submit data much earlier than the rest of the UK.</p>	<b>RA</b>

		<p><b>Integrity Issues</b></p> <p>A discussion took place on issues surrounding personation. It was noted that there was no clarity on how to deal with this and it was agreed to carry out a separate discussion with Jim Baird</p> <p>It was also noted that an election petition against Alistair Carmichael is to be lodged today.</p>	<p><b>EMB/JB</b></p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Scottish Parliamentary Elections 5 May 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Scottish Elections (Reduction in Voting Age) Bill</b></p> <p>It was noted that the Scottish Parliament is unanimous in supporting the Bill and has cross-party support.</p> <p>AON advised that the EC are planning to run a public awareness campaign aimed at 15-17 year olds in August. It was noted that more should be done to ensure that all local authorities across Scotland and the relevant education bodies are best supporting the discussion of electoral issues in schools and colleges.</p> <p>There needed to be a consistent approach and it was agreed that that Malcolm Burr would arrange to have this put on the agenda for the next SoLACE Meeting after the summer recess. (It is an issue for Councils not RO's).</p> <p><b>Scottish Parliament (Elections – Etc.) Order 2015 Stakeholder Consultation</b></p> <p>It was noted that comments on the Draft Scottish Parliament (Elections etc) Order 2015 consultation were to be submitted by 22 June 2015. SOLACE and SAA would both draft comments for submission via EMB.</p>	<p><b>MB</b></p>

		<p>It was noted that the Scottish Government plans to consider widening/strengthening the role of the EMB in future as part of the Further Devolution.</p> <p>It was noted that the Scottish Government’s view that retention of RO’s fees due to poor performance was unnecessary for the Scottish Parliament elections in 2016 due to the high standards consistently reached in Scotland.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the appointment of staff and if adequate provision has been made to ascertain if they have been employed by or on behalf of a candidate or a registered party in or about the election. The EMB agreed that that the word “knowingly” be incorporated into the rule about appointment of polling officers.</p> <p><b>Colour of Ballot Papers – Scottish Parliamentary Election</b></p> <p>A discussion took place regarding the colour of the two papers to be issued at next year’s Scottish Parliamentary Election. It was noted that the EMB’s recommendation was that they should be Salmon/Peach for the Regional Papers and Lilac for the Constituency Papers as were used in 2007 and 2011. It was agreed that CH would draft a letter to the 32 Local Authorities advising of the EMBs recommendations.</p> <p><b>Disabled Access</b></p> <p>Mary received a letter from Leonard Cheshire Disability advising quarter of disabled people said they had problems voting in person. A canvass of the EMB revealed that there were no complaints received in Scotland regarding inaccessible polling places.</p>	<p><b>CH</b></p>
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6	<b>eCounting for 2017 Local Government Elections</b>	<p><b>E- Counting</b>          Alex Mowat updated the board on the e-counting project. He thanked everyone for the high level quality feedback received on the Consultation Exercise. It was noted that there would not be a candidate rotation element introduced into the ballot papers.</p> <p><b>Project Board</b>          It was noted that procurement began on 21 May with the deadline for receipt of tenders 12 noon on 23 June. It was noted that Barbara MacGregor, City of Edinburgh Council and David Miller, Glasgow City Council have volunteered to evaluate tenders.</p>	
7	<b>Other Electoral Events</b>	<p><b>European Union Referendum</b></p> <p>It was noted that the European Union Referendum will take place by the end of 2017. It was noted that the Electoral Commission strongly recommend against the referendum taking place the same time as local elections on 5 May 2017.</p> <p>It was noted that the EAB will discuss the method of administration. Andrew Scallan, Director of Electoral Administration, the Electoral Commission was interested in attending a meeting of the EMB. It was agreed to extend an invitation to attend the next meeting in June.</p> <p>The Electoral Commission are undertaking a consultation on the wording on the proposed wording of the referendum question;</p> <p>“Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union?” (response options would be “yes” and “no”)          or          “Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CH</p>

		<p>European Union?” (response options would be “Remain a member of the European Union” and “Leave the European Union”.</p> <p>It was noted that that the Electoral Commission commended good guidance on yes &amp; no in the box.</p> <p>The EMB agreed that the preferred answer and response would be the former choice and would feed this back to the Electoral Commission along with the view that the Referendum should not be held on 5 May 2017.</p>	<p><b>EMB</b></p>
8	<p><b>Issues raised by Election Teams across Scotland</b></p>	<p><b>Overseas Voters</b></p> <p>Comments were noted from several authorisations that cut-off dates for Registration and Postal Votes were too close to the election. It would have been appreciated if the Cabinet Office had circulated the overseas posting dates earlier.</p> <p><b>Votes for Life Bill</b></p> <p>Comments were also noted from other local authorities on the proposed Votes for Life Bill. It was agreed that the Bill would be problematic for both EROs and ROs in terms of the overall timetable as well as registration.</p>	
9	<p><b>EMB Finance</b></p>	<p>CH advised that the Scottish Government has agreed to provide further funding to the Board.</p>	
10	<p><b>Regional Returning Officers’ Group and associated meetings</b></p>	<p><b>SPPP – 26 May 2015</b></p> <p>It was noted that the politicians were happy with the well run elections.</p> <p><b>ERRWG</b></p> <p>It was noted that CH would be attending the meeting on 4 June.</p>	

		<p><b>Electoral Integrity Roundtable</b></p> <p>It was noted that CG, AON and Jim Baird are attending the meeting of the Electoral Integrity Roundtable on 5 June.</p> <p><b>EPCG/EAB</b></p> <p>Next meeting is on 9 June.</p> <p><b>SOLAR</b></p> <p>It is noted that the SOLAR Working Group is meeting on 12 June to discuss Scottish Parliament (Elections Etc.) Order 2015.</p>	
11	AOB	<p><b>By-Election</b></p> <p>CH advised he has collated data for members of the SPPP regarding the forthcoming local government by-elections. It was agreed that he would forward this data on to the EMB.</p> <p><b>Chief Executive of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council</b></p> <p>Jo Miller, Chief Executive of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council has accepted an invitation from Mary to attend a meeting to observe the EMB at the meeting on 26 June 2015. It was agreed Chris would forward details and papers prior to the meeting.</p>	<p>CH</p> <p>CH</p>
12	Date of Next Meeting	26 June 2015	
<b>Date of future meetings: 31 July, 28 August, 25 September, 30 October, 27 November</b>			